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Vepses

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SUBCONTRACTOR'S MONOGRAPH

HRAF-10 Indiana-40

THE VEPSIANS

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SUBCONTRACTOR'S MONOGRAPH

ON

THE VEPSIANS

Prepared by the members of the faculty and
staff of Indiana University's Graduate Program
in Uralic and Asian Studies.

Author

Felix J. Oinas

Cartographer

John Ray

Editor

Ruth C. Heffner

Principal Investigator

Thomas A. Sebeok

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PREFACE

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This is one of a series of monographs produced under HRAF Subcontracts. The Indiana University Subcontracts were awarded to provide primarily ethnographic coverage of the Uralic peoples. This monograph has not been edited or evaluated by HRAF. The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors.

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George P. Springer
HRAF Research Associate
For Soviet Orbit

Milton D. Graham
HRAF Research Coordinator

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INTRODUCTION

- 1/4 1. This series of monographs was prepared under contract HRAF-2 Indiana-1 by members of the faculty and staff of Indiana University's Graduate Program in Uralic and Asian Studies, and under the auspices of the Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics. The undersigned, Chairman of the Program and of the Research Center, served as Principal Investigator. Ruth C. Heffner co-ordinated the project and was its general Editor. Other participants included, on the research staff -- Victor E. Hanzeli, Ken Ishimoto, Igor Kopytoff (Northwestern University), Nicholas Mihailoff-Shelly, Eeva Kangasmaa Minn, Felix J. Oinas, Alo Raun, Linda Raun, and Joseph Strmecki; and as cartographers -- Joan Harris, Robert Mayfield, and John Ray. The author or authors chiefly responsible for each handbook are indicated on the title page of each particular monograph.
- 128 2. The contract required that a topical format ("Annex A") be followed, wherever applicable. This requirement was, naturally, complied with, even though, from a purely scholarly point of view, a sharply different arrangement of the data, and of their interpretation, would have been more desirable.
3. The staff feel that the severe limitations of time and the inaccessibility of certain important resources resulted in a product which could be considerably bettered, given a more leisurely approach. The staff, of course, appreciate

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128 the circumstances which necessitated rapid completion of their monographs, but urge that these handbooks be revised and expanded at an early opportunity, as well as kept up to date, to insure both comprehensive coverage and the availability of information that is always timely and accurate.

114 4. Because of the pressure of time and the fact that the members of the research team are not native speakers of the English language, some of the manuscripts, despite editing, lack stylistic polish; occasional lapses from the idiomatic will, it is hoped, be eliminated from future versions. In no case do these faults obscure the meaning or distort the substance of the information.

114 122 5. The scholarly stimulation afforded by the researches undertaken for this project was not materially lessened by the obligation upon the staff to respond to the stringently specific requirements of the contract. While the peoples and languages of the Uralic group have been under continuous investigation at Indiana University for the past twelve years, work by our team on these monographs doubtless tended to enhance further the development of this field at this member institution of the Human Relations Area Files, Inc., whose assistance in providing this splendid opportunity is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

Thomas A. Sebeok
July 1955

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Annex "A," Subparagraph la,

Sociological Background

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SOCIETY

181 The life of the Vepsians is based primarily on an agricultural tradition. During the czarist rule, almost all of them tilled a patch of land which belonged to the village community. They also carried on fishing to satisfy their own needs. Under the Bolshevists, they had to join the kolkhozes, and this changeover was completed by the end of the twenties.

The Vepsians have been the most backward of the Balto-Finnic nationalities. After the first World War they still lived in a "wooden age," making the majority of their articles from wood and bark. There were several dwelling houses without chimneys; many Vepsians had no clocks, no beds, no knives or forks, and lamps were a rarity.

186 After the Russian revolution of 1917, a slight nationalism manifested itself among the Vepsians. The soldiers who had been in Finland began to propagate the idea that all the small Finnic nations, the Vepsians included, should be incorporated into Finland. Some of them were even ready to sacrifice everything for this goal. But these ideas hardly penetrated very deeply into the Vepsians because of their general dullness and their political ignorance. When the Bolsheviks came to power, these national ideas were soon forgotten.⁻¹⁻

were soon forgotten.

177 The Vepsians are strongly Russified, more so than any other Balto-Finnic people. Their language is full of Russianisms, and their appearance and way of life hardly differ from the Russian. They seem to have no nationalistic ideas today and they are steering now toward complete Russification.

More than half a century ago Basilier characterized the Isaijeva Vepsians, who were strongly Russianized at that time, as follows (p. 69): "It seems as if some sorrow were reflecting on the faces of these quiet, good-natured people. Why are they worrying, why mourning? The loss of their nationality, their language? Or because they are just alive? Who knows? But they do not have hope for future, joy for life." The Isaijeva Vepsians have been completely Russified for some time already. Meanwhile, the Russianization of other Vepsian villages is approaching the stage that Russianization had reached among the Isaijeva Vepsians in 1890. The above description may perhaps symbolize also the hopelessness of all the Vepsians at the present time. Only complete cultural autonomy could stop now the disintegration of the Vepsian culture.

Characteristic of the Vepsians is the following episode told by Kettunen. When the election for the Russian Constituent Assembly occurred in 1917, the organizers asked the Vepsians to vote for the Social Revolutionist

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177 ticket and they did so with no questions asked. Only one well-to-do farmer asked to have all the ballots read, and then he cast his vote for the Bolsheviks.

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Annex "A," Subparagraph 1b,

Sociological Background

HISTORICAL SETTING

101

"Vepsian" Designations. The Vepsians have no common name for themselves. The name "Vepsian" (vepsä, veps) which has recently become generally used in scientific literature (formerly the term "North Chudish" was used instead) is used only by the southernmost Vepsians in the former Novgorod government. Further northward towards Olonets, there are tracts where neither the people nor even the language has a name. "He speaks like us" (in Vepsian: t'öu k'eluu pagizheb) or "he speaks like us" (in Vepsian: meid'e kartte pagizheb), are in some places to the south of the Svir River the only way the Vepsians have of referring to their language. There is another name generally used among the North Vepsians. Those who speak Vepsian are said to speak "Ludic" (l'üdiksh). This name is, however, not applied to the Vepsians alone, but also to a group of the Karelians northwest of Lake Onega. These Karelians whose language is an intermediate form between Vepsian and Karelain call themselves "Ludes' (l'üd'ikoi).

The Russians call the Vepsians "Chuds" (chud') and further to the south, "Chukhars" (chukhary), names which they apply to various Finnish peoples, and apparently used to employ for foreigners in general. More seldom the

101 name "Kaivans" (kaivany) has also been used by the Russians. The Karelians in Olonets call the Vepsian language the language of "Naku" (nakun kieli), a name which comes from the Vepsian word naku 'over there', or sometimes "Shokshu language" (Shokshun kieli), after the northernmost Vepsian village.

175
[197] History. Vepsians are linguistically closely related to the Karelians, Finns, Estonians and Livonians. The languages of all of these nationalities form the so-called Balto-Finnic group, which is a subgroup of the Finno-Ugric family of languages. The original home of the Finno-Ugric peoples is considered to have been somewhere along the middle course of the Volga River. In the course of time, the forefathers of the Balto-Finns have moved westward. In the last centuries of the pre-Christian era they were in contact with the Baltic peoples (that is with the forefathers of the Latvians, Lithuanians and Old Prussians), and later with the Germanic peoples, as the loan words indicate. During these Germanic Balto-Finnic relations the Balto-Finns must have been to the east of the Gulf of Finland and Peipus Lake. There this relatively homogeneous group disintegrated and various nationalities started to migrate to their present areas. This occurred in the first centuries A. D.

It is probable that the Vepsians moved northeast to their present dwelling places.

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175 After reaching the mouth of the Oja River, they seem to have spread eastwards, mostly following the banks of that river, and establishing there the town of White Lake (Russian: Белое озеро). The Vepsians are probably mentioned for the first time in the history of the Goths by Jordanes under the name vasina-broncas; this tribe is said to have belonged under the rule of the Gothic king Ermanaric in the fourth century A. D. Related to this name is Visinnus, a hero mentioned by Saxo Grammaticus. Scholars believe that in both of these names the name of a people is concealed which Adam of Bremen calls wizzi and which in the Arabian sources of the ninth century occurs in the form of visu. The visu-people lived a three-months journey from Great Bolgar and were engaged in the trade which the Bulgarians conducted along the Volga between the countries south and northwest of Europe. The main commercial goods of the visu-people were beaver, sable and squirrel hides. These same people are further referred to in Russian chronicles under the name of ves'. All the names mentioned above (vasina-broncas, Visinnus, wizzi, visu, ves') are considered to be identical with the present-day name of the Vepsians, vepsä. Considering, however, the present limited distribution of the name vepsä among the Vepsians, the older names may not have signified all of the Vepsians, but just the southern group of them.

According to the Old-Russian chronicler Nestor, the ves' were situated in the district of White Lake and they took part in the

175 foundation of the Russian Empire in the ninth century A.D. They were further mentioned among the peoples who paid tribute to Rurik. Sineus, a Varangian chieftain, settled in White Lake, but died soon afterward. Then this town went to one of the chieftains of Rurik. Nestor mentions that in White Lake the ves' formerly lived but later the Varangians settled there. Apparently White Lake had an important significance from the point of view of commerce and strategy.

Ves' is mentioned for the last time in 882, as a participant in the warfare undertaken by the guardian of Igor, Rurik's son. After that this name disappears from the Russian sources; instead of it the chronicles talk of the "inhabitants of White Lake." The latter is no doubt a geographical term which included also the Russians who more and more migrated to these areas.

With the Russians came also Christianity to the White Lake area. Several monasteries were founded there, the first of them in the twelfth century. Some time after 1238 the region around White Lake formed an independent principality, which in 1485 was incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Moscow. In 1340 Novgorod attacked the White Lake area and in 1364 occurred a plague of such severity that, according to a chronicler, "there was not a single person in White Lake, and there was great grief in the country; the land became empty and wooded, and there were unpassable wildernesses."

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175 It was probably the wars, epidemics and the Russian oppression that caused the Vepsians to leave the White Lake region and move further westward. When the White Lake principality was incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Moscow in 1485, there were hardly any Vepsians left there.

648 The further history of the Vepsians cannot be separated from that of Russia. They have been up to the present day under continuous Russian rule and have gone through all the hard times of the czarist rule and the upheavals and miseries of Bolshevism. The only exception are the North or Onega Vepsians who, during the second World War, were for a short time (1941-1944) occupied by the Finns. When the Finns retreated, many Vepsians fled with them to Finland.

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Annex "A," Subparagraph 1c,

Sociological Background

SIZE AND GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF
POPULATION

101 Area inhabited by the Vepsians. Accord-
[161] ing to the latest data (Bol'shaia Sovetskaia
Entsiklopediia) the number of Vepsians is con-
sidered to be from 30,000-35,000. They live
in the following administrative units of the
Soviet Union: 1) Sheltozero rayon in Karelo-
Finnish SSR; 2) Vinnits, Ojat' and Kapsha rayons
in the Leningrad oblast; and 3) Oshta, Shola
and Efimovskii rayons in Vologda oblast.

162 There are no data available on the num-
ber of Vepsians in each of these groups. The
data of the 1926 census on the Vepsians are
classified according to okrugs (except for the
Karelo-Finnish SSR). The number of Vepsians
at that time was as follows:

1. In Sheltozero rayon in Karelo-
Finnish SSR..... 8,663
2. In Lodeinopolye okrug (the Vinnits,
Oshta and Ojat' rayons)..... 16,484
3. In Cherepovets okrug (the
Efimovskii and Shola rayons)... 5,357

162 4.	In Leningrad <u>okrug</u> (the Kapsha <u>rayon</u>)	2, 202
	Total	32, 706

In the literature it is customary to divide the Vepsians into three groups on the basis of linguistic and geographical differences. The size of these groups in the 1930's was estimated as follows:

1. The North or Onega Vepsians
in Sheltozero rayon.....ca. 10, 000
 2. The Middle Vepsians--south of
the Svir River as far as the
Korvoil village.....ca. 14, 000
 3. The South Vepsians--south of
the Korvoil village.....ca. 10, 000
- Total ca. 34, 000

The fourth group is formed by the so-called Isaijeva Vepsians who lived in Isaijevo volost to the east of the White Lake; their number in 1873 was 295. They were probably completely russified at the beginning of this century.

In this report this last division -- North, Middle, South and Isaijeva Vepsians--will be used.

166
369 Changes in the composition of the popula-
tion. The Vepsians are a typical rural popula-
tion, and until recently they almost never
lived in cities. Since 1930, however, consid-
erable changes have taken place in their
distribution. The collectivization of the

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[367] economy caused flights to Finland (especially among the North Vepsians) and a rush to the towns. The demand for manpower in governmental, municipal and industrial fields also increased the number of the Vepsian-speaking population in the towns. Deportations and mass-arrests, which started concurrently with forced collectivization, caused further changes in the distribution of the population. And finally [167] we should not forget the role of the second World War, due to which a considerable number of Vepsians moved in two directions--either to the east to the Russians or to the west to the Finns. Flight to Finland was especially easy in North Vepse, which was for some time occupied by Finland. After the end of the war in 1944, Finland was obliged to return the refugees to the Soviet Union. At least a part of them, however, escaped to Sweden and could thus not be compelled to return.

161 Population trends. The first numerical data for the Vepsians were published by K ppen in 1848, according to which there were 15,617 Vepsians, of them 8,550 in Olonets government and 7,067 in Novgorod government. The official Russian publication of 1873 gave the number of the Vepsians as 26,172. According to the census of 1897, the Karelians' number was 25,559, of whom there were in Olonets government 16,147, in Novogrod government 9,157, and elsewhere 255. In the last figures

161 the Isaijeva Vepsians (295) were not included. Finnish scholars considered the Vepsians' number by the end of the czarist regime to be around 25,000, which, however, may be less than their actual number.

The increase of the Vepsians in the 50-year period from 1848 to 1897 was 63.66 per cent, which is less than the average increase of the whole population of this area. Especially low was the increase in the Novgorod government--29.58 per cent. The increase of the Vepsians in the following 30 years, from 1897 to 1926, was even lower than before--28.2 per cent.

What is the reason for this slow increase of the Vepsians?

Let us examine first their natural increase. It has been widely noticed that the Vepsian families have many children. We have exact data from one community in North Vepse, [163] Sheltozero, which would confirm this statement. In the years 1923 to 1926 the birth-rate in Sheltozero per year was 53.4, while the death-rate for the same period was 35.4. The natural increase in this community thus was 18, which was higher than the average increase of 16 in Karelia. [165]

177 If, despite this considerable natural increase, the number of Vepsians does not show an adequate increase, then the reason for this is to be sought in the russification process. Russification is first of all noticeable in isolated villages, the population of which is

177 surrounded by the Russians. Among the 300 Vepsians in Isaijeva village there were in 1887 only 10 persons, all of them older men, who knew Vepsian well. Since the young and middle-aged people spoke only Russian, with the death of the older ones this Vepsian group ceased to exist. This most probably happened at the beginning of this century. Fast russification has been noticeable also in the southernmost Vepsian village, Pjatina (Russian: Pyatino). Kettunen, who first visited this village in 1917, found here a few Vepsians who still spoke their mother tongue. But 17 years later, in 1934, there were only two Vepsian speakers: an old woman who had been brought there from another village and her husband who had learned his language largely from her.

Not only isolated villages, but also the villages in compact Vepsian areas show a clear trend toward russification, especially in the period of Bolshevik rule. The reason for this is the increasing influence of the schools, the press, and radio, the increased number of governmental jobs available which require a knowledge of Russian, service in the Red Army, work in factories, mixed marriages, etc. Even the Soviet authors do not conceal this general trend. Debets, for instance, writes (p. 139): "After the Great October Socialist Revolution... the process of mixture of the Vepsians and the Russians has been especially increased. It is easy to see how individual villages change their national character and change from Vepsian to Russian. So, for instance, the village Kiino in Shola rayon is

177 considered now Russian, but the old people still remember that 'formerly they were Chukhars.' In Syagozero, Oshta rayon, their answer to the question of their nationality is 'Russian,' although they all know Vepsian and use it generally more than Russian." This last statement is especially significant. The fact that the Vepsians are beginning to identify themselves with Russians may in the not too distant future lead to their complete fusion with the Russians.

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Annex "A," Subparagraph 1d,

Sociological Background

ETHNIC GROUPS

141 The following description of the Vepsians' physical characteristics is based on the study of G. F. Debets made in the rayons of Shol'sk and Oshtinsk in 1933. Debets secured the measurements from 255 male and 94 female Vepsians and from 73 males of Vepsian and Russian parents. The largest age grouping fell into the 25-39 age bracket.

The Vepsians are, in stature, somewhat smaller than the Russians of the same region, whereas the Vepsian-Russian mixtures occupy an intermediate position (average height for Vepsian men is 164.46 cm., for women 154.22 cm.; for the mixed racial group 164.79 cm., and for the Russians 165.80-166.81 cm.)

142 It has been pointed out that the population in the two rayons mentioned above is the lightest in the whole of the Soviet Union in regards to pigmentation. There is a great predominance of light eyes among the Vepsians (men 61.6 per cent, women 55.3 per cent), whereas the percentage of dark eyes is very small (men 1.6 per cent, women 1.1 per cent). As for the color of the hair, reddish-hair in different shadings is predominant (among men 87.7 per cent, among women 95.8 per cent). The percentage of

142 black hair is considerably less (among men 10.2 per cent, among women completely lacking). The lowest number falls into the flaxen-colored hair group (2.1 per cent of men and 4.3 per cent of women). The Russians of the same region are slightly darker than the Vepsians, whereas the cross-breeds fall somewhere between the Vepsians and the Russians. The hair of the Vepsians is usually straight and soft, as is the case with all groups in Northern and Eastern Europe. Body hair is only slightly developed.

There is little difference between the Vepsians and the Russians in regard to the growth of the beard, save that in the former it is a somewhat lesser growth.

141 The head of the Vepsians is a little shorter and lower and, consequently, more brachycephalic than that of the Russians. Average head measurements are as follows: head length--men 185.59 cm., women 178.58 cm.; head breadth--men 153.34 cm., women 146.12 cm.; cephalic index--men 82.67, women 81.76.

The facial index of the Vepsian men is 88.40 (Debets gives 188.40, which must be a misprint), of women 87.32. The facial form differs somewhat between the men and women: the man's face is predominantly quadrangular (56.2 per cent), less rounded-oval (30.9 per cent), while that of the woman is mainly oval (49.4 per cent), less quadrangular (38.6 per cent).

141 The Russians have a more markedly round face.

The nose of the Vepsians is somewhat shorter than that of the Russians. The nasal index of the men is 71.30, of women 68.76. The height of the nasal bridge is average. There are more concave noses among the Vepsians than among the Russians. The tip of the nose of the Vepsians is also more often tilted.

The ear index of men is 53.80, of women 53.70. The ear fold is more turned in among the Vepsians than among the Russians.

144 Debets comes to the conclusion that the Vepsians can be classified as belonging to the so-called East European type, a type which is described by the Soviet anthropologists. It is rather close to the East Baltic race, being distinguished from the latter by only a few features, such as the lesser height and the predominance of concave noses. The Vepsians are more characteristic representatives of the East European race than the Russians of the same region.

113

SOURCE

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Annex "A," Subparagraph 1e,

Sociological Background

LANGUAGES

191 Knowledge of foreign languages. Almost
177 all of the Vepsians know Russian. Turunen states (p. 156) that, "The Vepsians have bilingualism in their blood." Russian tends to penetrate even into their everyday life, for the Vepsians sing Russian folk songs, the so-called chastushka, and tell their tales both in Vepsian and Russian. However, the knowledge of Russian is, among the older people, sometimes not very thorough. This appears for instance in loan-translations, some of which bear witness to the confusion of Russian words which are close in sound, such as Vepsian seišta 'to stand, to cost' (from Russian stojat 'to stand', and stoit 'to cost'); and Vepsian veda- 'to convey, to weigh' (from Russian vezti 'to convey', and vesit 'to weigh'). The younger generation, however, knows Russian well.

197 Vepsians are linguistically most closely related to the Karelians whose language they can learn to understand completely within a few days. The knowledge of Karelian is more widespread among the North Vepsians who live in the neighborhood of the Karelians and have frequent contact with them.

The Vepsian language and its dialects. Although Vepsian is close to Karelian and Finnish,

197 there are a few basic differences between them. A peculiarity of Vepsian is the retention of consonants where in Karelian and Finnish these have disappeared. Thus, the Vepsian says jagan or d'agan 'I divide' where the Karelian and the Finn say jaan; magadan 'I sleep' but in Finnish makaan; Vepsian punoda 'to plait,' but in Finnish punoa. The same peculiarity is also found in Ludic, the transition dialect between Vepsian and Karelian to the northwest of Lake Onega.

Noteworthy in Vepsian is also the disappearance of vowels in the final and medial positions, as is the case in Estonian and in the western dialects of Finland: must 'black' -Finnish and Karelian musta; jumal or d'umal 'god' -Finnish and Karelian jumala; kukrod 'pouches' -Finnish kukkarot.

The Vepsian dialects have been divided by Finnish scholars into three main groups: North, Middle, and South Vepsian. Soviet scholars, according to the Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia, divide them into four groups by separating the eastern part of the Middle Vepsian dialect into a special dialect group. The latter division is not necessary, for the eastern dialects can more justly be considered a sub-group of Middle Vepsian.

The dialect differences in Vepsian are more distinct between North Vepsian, on the one hand, and Middle and South Vepsian on the other. These differences, however, do not impede mutual

3: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4
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197 understanding. Some of the peculiarities of North Vepsian are as follows: the j is represented by d' (d'arv 'lake', d'ob 'he drinks', elsewhere jarv, job); the consonants l, n, r are soft before e (tul'en 'I come', son'en 'of the blood vessel', pur'en 'I bite'); the plural adessive ending is the Russian-like l, elsewhere soft l' (heil 'by them', kün'z'il 'on the nails'); the first and second person plural ending are -m and -t, respectively, elsewhere -mai or -mei, -tai or -tei, (tul'em 'we come', tulet 'you come').

There are very few differences between Middle and South Vepsian. Some of these are the Middle Vepsian e is represented by o or ö in South Vepsian in certain cases (Middle Vepsian tuleb 'he comes', sülgeb 'he spites', South Vepsian tulob, sülgöb); the adessive ending in Middle Vepsian is -ou or -ū, in South Vepsian -ō (Middle Vepsian edou, edū 'before', touvū 'in the winter', in South Vepsian edō, touvō); the diphthongs in Middle Vepsian have been preserved, in South Vepsian they have developed into long vowels (Middle Vepsian pakaine 'frost', nälgäine 'hungry', linduine 'little bird', South Vepsian pakān'e, nälgān'e, lindūn'e).

197 In the 1930's an attempt was made to establish a Vepsian literary language on the basis of the Middle Vepsian dialects. A significant role in this attempt was played by F. A. Andrejev and M. M. Hämalainen who, since 1932, have published in Latin script a Vepsian grammar, a reader in two parts, and a

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197 Vepsian-Russian dictionary. In addition to these,
186 text books in mathematics and biology were also published in Vepsian. All of these books were prepared for use in the Vepsian schools. This liberal policy of the Soviet authorities toward the literary languages of the minorities was, however, completely changed at the end of the thirties. The literary languages of the Vepsians and other minorities were then liquidated, for, according to the new policy, they were supposed to be sufficiently "served by the Russian literary language."

197 Russian influence on Vepsian. Vepsian shows stronger Russian influence than any other Balto-Finnic languages. This is especially apparent in the Vepsian sound system which is completely Russian. Tunkelo lists eighteen Vepsian sound features which owe their existence to Russian influence. Such are, for instance, the use of voiced stops (b, d, g), the affricates (c, c', č, č') and the consonant clusters (such as br, pl, sp) at the beginning of the word; the increase of the sibilants (z, z', š, ž) and spirants (f, h, X); the shortening of double consonants and long vowels; the increase of the softening of the consonants; the regressive assimilation which appears in the modification of the consonants due to the character of the following sounds: e. g., uk 'old man' with the final -k, if the next word begins with a voiceless consonant, but ug with -g, if the next word begins with a voiced consonant or vowel.

Vepsian has borrowed a large percentage of

3: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4
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197 the Russian words. Especially dangerous for
177 the Vepsian language is the great number of
Russian translation-loans, i. e. special Russian
expressions simply translated into Vepsian.

197 The tendency to replace Russian for Vepsian
177 is clearly noticeable. In 1926, seven per cent
of the Vepsians in Leningrad oblast considered
themselves Vepsians only by nationality, not
by language, for they had adopted Russian in
place of their mother tongue. Considering that
the percentage of Russified Karelians in 1926
was less than half this number (3.4 per cent),
we can see that the Vepsians are especially in
danger of losing their language.

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Annex "A," Subparagraph lh,

Sociological Background

SOCIAL VALUES AND PATTERNS OF LIVING

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[607] The Vepsian character. The Vepsians are, in comparison with their neighbors, the Russians and Karelians, uncommunicative, reserved and less friendly. Kettunen on his field trip to Vepse was sometimes refused lodging for the night on the ground that life was very hard. The Russians, however, received him very kindly and offered him whatever they had. Kettunen further failed to find in the Vepsians' character the sincerity which is so characteristic of the Karelians.

The Russian authors praise the honesty and disinterestedness of the Vepsians, wondering that they can manage without locks and can charge strangers so little for a night's lodgings. But the first World War and the years of revolution following it have had, in this as well as in other respects, an adverse influence upon them.

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Of the moral level of the Vepsians certain negative observations have been made. The faithfulness of married women has been found to be faltering and the number of children born outside of marriage great.

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Way of life. According to all descriptions

511 Way of life. According To all descriptions
of the living conditions of the Vepsians at the
end of the czarist rule and the beginning of the
Bolshevik reign, their life seems to be quite
primitive. Kettunen, upon his first arrival at
Vepse in 1917, was overcome by the charm of
this primitiveness (p. 41): "I at once felt as
though I had arrived at the primitive Balto-
Finnic imaginary land, where I had sometimes
[493] wished to be, at least for a while." There are
villages to which one cannot go by carriage in
summer, but only on foot; for carrying loads a
511 kind of sleigh (purilazh) is used. Quite a num-
342 ber of houses are without chimneys, so that
the smoke can only escape by the doors and
windows. Some of the huts are not even rain-
proof; Kettunen tells that in a Vepsian house in
Pjatina (Russian: Pratino) they all were bother-
ed by rain at night. There are no beds in the
houses, and the people sleep on benches attach-
ed to the walls, or on the oven, or even on the
floor. During the cold winters the Vepsians,
following the Russian model, used to bring
young animals into the room. Kettunen some-
times had to share his working room not only
with other people but also with calves and
poultry.

[343] The bathhouse is rather a rarity in
515 Vepse. Instead, the people used to bathe in
the oven of the dwelling house. When the oven
is heated, and some straw spread on its floor,
one member of the family carefully crawls into
it, feet first, so as not to touch the hot mouth
of the oven. The oven is spacious enough for
one person to sit. After he is in, he closes

3: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4
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515 the door of the oven and, with a bathing whisk, throws water against the oven sides to create steam. After the bath, he crawls out and washes himself in a vessel on the floor, while the next bather enters the oven. The Russians in some places have the same habit of bathing in the oven.

805 There are no clocks in Vepsian houses, but time is determined by the rooster and by the sun. The important role the rooster plays in Vepsian households as announcer of the hour may have been the reason for the especially favorable attitude toward the rooster in Vepsian folk tales.

354 Lamps came into use in the last years of the czarist period. Since petroleum was expensive and difficult to get, especially during the first World War, splinters were mostly employed for lighting purposes. The old women, taking care of the animals, held burning splinters in their mouths, moving around like ancient witches.

322 In Middle and South Vepse the people
415 live in a "wood age." They have very little contact with towns, but make the things they need for everyday use out of wood. Wooden vessels are used even for cooking purposes. Also, birch bark is generally used for making various articles, such as all kinds of baskets, cups, spoons, etc., which the Vepsians themselves call "silver dishes." Rozov tells that in 1926 he and his colleagues witnessed the Middle Vepsians boiling mushrooms in a

322 birch bark box, which was also made in their
415 presence, and eating them afterwards with
spoons made of the same material.

412 Both their tools and methods of work
are extremely primitive. In 1917-18 grinding
stones were still being used; some of them
made even of wood. There was not a single
churn in the whole territory, and butter was
[294] made with a whisk (härkin); there was no spinning
wheel, and thread was spun with the spindle.
[501] The Vepsian boats were punts hollowed out of
296 single logs and propelled by a single oar. Wash-
ing was done in a unique way: linens and
clothes were put into a vessel and pounded with
two wooden sticks. In the winter, a hollow
made in the ice served as the vessel. Of course,
only thick homespun cloth could stand this kind
of washing, and it grew even softer and suppler
after several washings. It is remarkable to
find such primitiveness so close to Leningrad
as the Vepsian areas are.

264 The Vepsians' eating habits are as primi-
tive as the rest of their life. Professor Kettunen
gives a description of their eating (p. 42): "We
had a common mushroom cup on the table in
which everybody, bathing of course their fingers,
seasoned their pancakes." Kettunen managed,
with certain difficulties, to get a cup for him-
self. But when curious villagers came during
the mealtime into the hut, Kettunen's special
cup attracted great attention. Finally an old
woman decided that he must be an "Old Believer."
These "Old Believers" were noted for having
special dishes for those who belonged to different

264 denominations or sects.

Table knives and forks are, for the Vepsians, too much of a luxury. Kettunen had a fork of his own, but the Vepsians did not like it and said: "It's really terrible to look at when you stick it into you lip."

515 It goes without saying that if people and animals live together, cleanliness cannot be achieved. The Vepsian children, too, did not add to the overall cleanliness of the homes. Kettunen relates that the children liked especially to sit on the eating table. Often the mother lifted her dirty, crawling child down from the table and threw a hot pancake to him, saying lovingly, "Eat, my dear."

One of the routine jobs done on Sundays is the killing of lice. For this purpose the whole family, one after another, kneels down in front of a girl who scratches the scalp with a big sheath knife.

796 Customs, superstitions, and recreation.
The Vepsians stick to their old customs faithfully. Especially the most important events of a lifetime, the marriage and funeral, must follow set rules to the minutest detail.

585 The marriage of the South Vepsians is preceded by a feast (käzi-isk) in which the girl and her parents give their final consent to marriage. Some days before the wedding the girls of the village give a party for the bride,

585 which ends with a secret ceremony: the nude
bride, standing on a frying-pan, is washed all
over, and this water is mixed into the pie dough.
These pies are given to the bridegroom and the
wedding people to eat so that they will all like the
bride.

The wedding ceremony consists of two
parts: the first and more important is the
farewell party given at the bride's home be-
fore the wedding in the church; after the wed-
ding comes the celebration at the bridegroom's
585 home. While the bride dresses herself for the
789 wedding, she has to put on several magic things,
such as a stone of special shape on her neck,
broken needles into her dress, and a string of
pearls blessed by a monk around her neck; to
obtain the pearls the girls have to make pil-
grimages of hundreds of miles to the Valamo
or the Solovetsk monasteries. Guns are then
fired to scare off the evil spirits and the magic
spells of wicked people. The bride and bride-
groom have to sit close to each other so that
they will not be alienated later on. It is especial-
ly important for them not to move from their
places without an urgent reason. If they must
leave, then someone sweeps the floor in front
of them. Before the young people, together with
their company, leave for the church to get
married, the matchmaker goes three times
around the whole party hitting the earth with a
whip. After the wedding, several other customs
have to be observed in the bridegroom's home,
such as the chasing away of a bad spirit
(pätsinrahkoo) from above the stove, etc.

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The wedding ceremonies of the North Vepsians differ considerably from those of the South Vepsians. A characteristic feature of the North Vepsian wedding is the repetitional arrival of the bridegroom's party to the bride's house on the wedding day and the withdrawal to a neighboring farm. Each time, the representatives of the bride have to go to this farm to ask them to come back. In these goings back and forth, one of the two best men (drushka) plays an important role; wherever they enter, he makes a sign of the cross with his whip on the door. Before the wedding party leaves for the church, the wizard (noid) has to perform several tricks in order to keep off the evil. The wizard and the best men have to keep vigil all the time during the wedding ceremonies so that no bad or jealous person will harm the bridal pair. Harm to the bridegroom is especially feared, lest he be unable to fulfill his duty as a husband during the wedding night.

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With death are associated several customs. The corpse of an adult is kept for three days in the house, that of a child for two days. Right after death the corpse is washed and his best clothes put on. On the head of a man a cap is placed, on the head of a woman a white bonnet. Then the corpse is lifted onto

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a table under the icons. After the message of death spreads through the village, the people begin to gather in the house of mourning. There weeping songs are sung both in Vepsian and in Russian. Hymns are sung only for well-to-do Vepsians.

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The Vepsians have also several customs pertaining to the celebration of calendar festivals. On New Year's Day, for instance, they perform various magical actions. They dip splinters into a hole in the ice, light them, and predict, from the way the splinters burn, events of the coming year. They also take a pot of rich porridge into the kiln, bow to each corner, ask the spirits to come and eat the porridge and to help them during the harvesting period the next fall. In the evening they go to kulikoil, that is, to make fun in disguise in village houses. The jokers must be let in, even if the family is sleeping when they arrive, and they are shown respect which is almost mingled with fear.

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Recent descriptions of the Vepsians show how strongly their everyday life is even today permeated with the darkest superstitions. When Kettunen in 1917-18 undertook to open their eyes, he had no success at all. Instead, some of them began even to consider him some kind of magician.

754

The Vepsians believe that sicknesses are not dependent upon the human organism but are caused by evil powers outside the body. They are convinced that only magic and witchcraft can cope with these evil forces. If someone falls sick after bathing, they go into the bathhouse, taking bread, salt and other offerings there, and read a charm to the spirit of the bathhouse. If the sickness is caused by the forest, then they try to reconcile the forest spirit with sacrifices. Often they resort to the help of a witch, who is usually in every village.

754 A cure can be effected only if it is accompanied by the reading of incantations.

Sometimes the magical tricks used in healing may have undesirable effects, such as the methods used by an old woman for curing a man's rheum. She read an incantation over the water, spat into it, waving at the same time the shears in her hand, and then threw the cold water on his naked back.

754 The Vepsians believe that not only
789 supernatural spirits but also people can cause sickness and other mishaps by their "evil eyes." To protect themselves they have several magic rites to abolish the bad effects of these people. Thus, before going hunting, they smoke their guns in the fire to rid them of any kind of witch's spell. During the wedding ceremonies they shoot guns in the house to ward off the effects of evil spirits and evil people. The Vepsians consider the gypsies to be powerful magicians who must not be made angry. Since the gypsies are aware of this supposed power, they do not fail to profit by it. Kettunen tells of the arrival of cartful after cartful of gypsies at a South Vepse village during the wartime famine in 1917-18 and how they were treated in the best possible way by the villagers.

517 The Vepsians are gregarious and join together either for work or for pleasant pastimes. These gatherings are especially common in winter when everyone has much free time on his hands. On such occasions they sing, tell

517 stories and jokes, and tell riddles in order to find out who are the smartest among them.

527 From the Russians the Vepsians have acquired the habit of celebrating festivals on a large scale. One of such festivals, Jyrgin praznik, is described by Kettunen (pp. 48-49). For this feast each person spent his very last resources, willing to suffer hunger a few weeks later. After beer and liquor were made, and the foods prepared in all the houses, the festival began. "The huts that had no chimney as well as the white rooms in Tshaigla were teeming with people, who had come from near and far, with relatives, acquaintances and strangers. They revelled three, four days at a stretch, afternoons, nights and mornings in the light of a small lamp or a flickering splinter-fire. They drank, yelled, shrieked and fought, but most of all they danced, for even the old men seemed to consider dancing a polite recognition of the hospitality of the house. It was extremely funny to see those bearded old men performing solo dances in their big felt shoes, their serious faces sweating, as if fulfilling a difficult work obligation. The whole feast was like some kind of a 'God's feast' described by Agricola in which 'girls got drunk and women got drunk'; unfortunately, also, Agricola's verse of 'doing many shameful deeds' fits well these Vepsian bacchanalias."

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Annex "A," Subparagraph li,

Sociological Background

ARTISTIC AND INTELLECTUAL EXPRESSION

538 Folklore. Folklore is the most important manifestation of the Vepsian national culture. The literature in Vepsian, created mainly during the Bolshevik reign, is limited to a few textbooks. Russian literature has never been able to satisfy the literary needs of the people. For this reason, it has been necessary to resort to an oral tradition which today is still alive to a certain degree. The Vepsians like company and have the habit of spending long winter evenings, especially during fasting time, together singing, telling stories, jokes and riddles. In this practice, the most talented people have become such skilled artists that their fame has passed beyond the boundaries of their own villages. Although the knowledge of the old Kalevala runes is limited to only a few fragments, which are not even generally known, the Vepsian lore is, nevertheless, quite abundant and variegated. Needless to say, it reveals a strong Russian influence.

533 The most common folk songs are the so-called chastushka (the term borrowed from Russian), which are sung by all of the Vepsian women. They consist of only four lines and have a simple melody. They deal mostly with

3: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4
Vepses

533 love, expressing now the longing for the lover, now some love wish, now again some moral or a confession. Most of the chastushka contain a comparison: The two first lines give a detail from nature or some other external observation, whereas the last two lines, the principal part of the song, describe the feelings of the singer. Some of the chastushka have been created on Russian models, but the Vepsians have often brought to them their own special features. During the Bolshevik rule the chastushka seem to have been especially favored; they are presented, for instance, during intermissions at the theaters. Three chastushkas are quoted below:

On the hill it is snowing,
The snow is blowing even into the grave.
My beloved is coming,
He is playing an accordion.

I mowed, I mowed the meadow,
The thick brush-wood.
There came a strange boy,
Just my own beloved.

The cuckoo is calling calling,
On the top of a big fir tree.
The girl is crying, crying,
On the neck of a handsome boy.

The Vepsians have also plenty of longer folk songs. Several of them relate touching experiences of life stories and, in general, make a more lasting impression than the chastushka.

533 Of special interest are the song-tales whose first lines are usually recited and which are then continued in the song. Due to the lack of musical instruments, especially in former times, special dance songs have been sung to accompany the dances.

538 Storytelling is the most favored pastime of the Vepsians. Some Vepsians have achieved in this art a high degree of skill. Especially common in the tale repertoire are the animal tales, but tales of priests, farm hands, the devil, the stupid but lucky youngest brother, and some anecdotes are often told. Since the Vepsians are bilingual, the stories are told either in Vepsian or in Russian. Fairy tales form the most vital genre among the Vepsians, and even the children practice telling them.

The Vepsians have so many proverbs that for almost every situation there is an appropriate saying. Part of them have been borrowed 524 from the Russians, but a part are also 538 clearly of local origin. The solving of riddles is practised not only among the children but also among adults. Sometimes a group of people come together to tell riddles and thus to find out who is smartest among them. Quoted here are several representative proverbs and riddles:

(a) Who grows up without discipline
will die without honor.

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(b) Who digs a grave for the other one
will fall in himself.

(a) The small Makarii asks everybody to
lift up his feet. /Treshold./

(b) Four brothers run next to each other,
but cannot reach each other. /Wagon/

(c) In the middle the fire is burning,
around is the Lake Onega. /Samovar./

751

Charms and incantations are used for heal-
ing sickness, averting dangers, and if the mis-
haps have already occurred, for finding relief
from trouble. Especially interesting are the
snake charms. The Vepsian charms and
incantations seem to be, for the most part, of
Russian origin.

533

The spiritual songs and legends are pre-
sented mainly by people who have seen much
trouble--the old people and the beggars. Blind
people on their begging trips used to sing them.
The spiritual songs are taken over completely
from the Russian songs.

Weeping songs are sung mainly on two
occasions--in connection with marriage and,
with death. But any adversity can be the sub-
ject of weeping songs. In recent years the
Vepsians have sung of the war, which rolled over
their villages and robbed them of their husbands,

533 sons and other relatives. The Vepsian weeping songs are much simpler than the Karelian ones. They are in free meter, and they express in simple terms the innermost feelings of the singers. Weeping songs are the deepest-rooted and most original products of Vepsian folklore.

I don't have mother any more,
My mother is dead.
I don't have anyone to whom to go,
Whom I will wait for,
No one will come to greet me.

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Annex "A," Subparagraph lj,

Sociological Background

EDUCATION

212 Literacy. The number of literates among the Vepsians is low. In 1897 the percentage was as follows: men--27.34 per cent, women--1.86 per cent; average for both sexes--14.27 per cent. Kettunen states that in the 1917 elections the Vepsians were told to vote for ticket number 4, but this "illiterate mass" could not tell one ticket from another. In 1929 the percentage of literates was said to be 33.5 per cent, but according to Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, all the Vepsian children are now literate.

871 Schools. During the czarist rule there were no special schools for the Vepsians, nor was Vepsian taught in any school. The teachers were hostile to any nationalistic trends. The story is told that a list containing the Finnish alphabet beside the Russian was taken away from a student by his teacher and burned. The Bolsheviks, after coming to power, founded national schools for the national minorities, the Vepsians included, the reason for which was to keep the minorities from having too familiar contact with other nationalities by allowing them to retain a measure of cohesion. On the other hand, it gave to the Communists a good opportunity to parade their magnanimity

871 abroad. In Leningrad oblast, there were in 1928-29 eight four-year Vepsian schools. We do not have any information for the later fate of these schools. Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, dealing with the education of Vepse, states only laconically: "Seven-year general school training is introduced."

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Annex "A," Subparagraph 1k,

Sociological Background

RELIGION

795 The Vepsians are officially Greek Cath-
781 olic. The influence of the Church has been,
771 however, very superficial, limited mainly to
the observance of formalities, such as the
sign of the cross, bowing down to the floor,
and so on. Under such conditions the old,
heathen beliefs have had an excellent chance
to survive among the Vepsians up to the pres-
ent day. Sometimes certain features of the
Christian religion have been mixed with
superstitions. Thus a Vepsian family, for
instance, was afraid of breaking the fasts for
fear that this might cause the sickness of a
cow or another animal.

776 The Vepsian heathen religion is based
on a belief in spirits. The dwelling house and
all other buildings have their protective spirits,
called "masters" and "mistresses." Such
are pert-izhand 'master of the hut,' lavan
izhand 'master of the cow-shed,' lavan emag
'mistress of the cow-shed,' külbetin izhand
'master of the bathhouse,' gomnan izhand
'master of the kiln,' and gomnan emag
'mistress of the kiln,' etc.; the two last-
mentioned are called also rigibukoo and
rigibab, respectively. Entering the bathhouse,
the people bow toward each corner and ask a

776 blessing from the spirits. When a family changes its abode, these unseen masters and mistresses are asked to come along.

One of the most popular spirits of the Vepsians is metshiine, the forest spirit. He is as high as the forest wherein he dwells and is ever-present there. He can also assume a human shape. Metshiine sometimes helps the hunter, predicts future happenings to the people, etc. Communication with him requires the special skill of the magician who alone is able to make him appear. There are also other forest spirits, such as metsan izhand 'master of the forest' and metsan emag 'mistress of the forest,' towards whom the attitude seems to be one of trust, while the terms metsamhed 'forest men' and metsamhen poigad 'sons of the forest men' are even used as abusive words.

In the water lives the vedhiine, or turzhaz, who protects his herd against the nets and seines of fishermen. The hairy water spirit onah moves on misty and rainy days from one lake to another. Kühäroo and kaharoo are spirits of corn who bring luck to the crop.

Over the other world reign the man izhand 'earth master' and man emag 'earth mistress.'

Similar beliefs in spirits are to be found among the closest neighbors of the

3: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4
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776 Vepsians, the so-called Ludians in eastern
Olonets. It is possible that several features
of these beliefs have been borrowed by the
Vepsians and Ludians from the Russians.

113

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Annex "A," Subparagraph 11,

Sociological Background

PUBLIC INFORMATION

203

The principal means for disseminating news among the Vepsians is by rumor, and this is done especially by women. The women and girls spin and do their needlework together. Spindles under their arms, they go from one house to another carrying news all over the village, in this way replacing the mailman. Their main interest is with the current happenings in the village, such as deaths, births, courtships, etc.

Kettunen gives the following example of the functioning of the "village mail" (p. 54): "For instance, a soldier arrives home from a 3-year unbroken service, and his wife has just given birth to a child. The woman who first hears of this, sets aside her spindle immediately and goes to the village, so that nobody else luckier than her has the chance to spread the news. Then the people in the village will follow each change in the relationship of this couple with the greatest excitement. 'He beat his wife with a leather belt,' somebody suddenly hears, and in five minutes the whole village repeats: 'He beat her with a leather belt.' Usually they whisper behind the back of the people involved, but there always is in the village some simple one who makes the results

203 of the general criticism known to the one concerned."

204 From one village the news spreads to the others, and so the rumors completely replace the newspaper. There was hardly any newspaper read in the South Vepsian area in 1917-1918. Kettunen tells of the excitement in Arskaht village when his own newspaper was due; not only were the men of the village anxious to see the only newspaper in their village but they were eager to use it for cigarette paper.

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Annex "A," Subparagraph 1p,

Sociological Background

HEALTH AND SANITATION

262

Dietary habits. The dietary habits of the Vepsians are simple. When Kettunen visited them in 1917-18, their menu was almost always the same, consisting of lean broth and greased potato slices or mashed potatoes baked in a pot. In the afternoon between 5 and 6 o'clock they drank tea without sugar and ate rye bread with it. Some of them drank up to ten glasses of tea.

Of the Vepsians' special foods the following should be mentioned: tau^kun, a dish prepared of a mixture of rye, oats, barley and pea meal, all mixed with clabbered milk; pudrod, rye-porridge; kisel', thickened fruit juice; türö, made of salt water or a kind of sour drink into which pieces of bread are crumbled; k^yrz--dumplings made from pea meal. Small cakes are baked from oats flour as follows: thin dough is poured on a greased pan, which has no handle, and is put for a few seconds into the oven in which a fire is burning with a high flame. Meat pies are made usually on Sundays.

3: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estõnia RG4
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Annex "A," Subparagraph 3a,

Economic Background

AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL

423 By the end of the last century the economic condition of the Vepsians had become disturbing. Several areas which they had long considered their own came, due to a division of the land, into the hands of the forest industrialists. Thus, for instance, in the southernmost community inhabited by the Vepsians, Borisovshchino, only 18,683 desyatins (1 desyatina $\approx$ 2.7 acres) of the total of 138,514 desyatins of land were still in the possession of the Vepsian peasants. Moreover, the owners of the forests, who lived in Petersburg, gained sole right to the use of the lakes which were situated on their estates. One can understand the dissatisfaction of the Vepsians whose slash-and-burn activities and fishing were now considerably restricted, while at the same time their population was increasing. Several law-suits resulted in which the Vepsians tried desperately to regain their rights to the lands settled by their forefathers.

241 Agriculture and cattle-breeding. The Vepsians' main means of livelihood are agriculture and cattle-breeding. In 1897, 90.73 per cent of the Vepsians were engaged in farming. This situation has continued

3: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4
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241 unchanged to recent times; in 1927 the percentage of farmers among the Vepsians was said to be "more than 90 per cent." Barley, rye, oats, potatoes, turnips, cabbage, and flax were grown. Agriculture was not sufficient, however, to maintain a decent standard of living for the people and, in some places, until the introduction of the kolkhoz system, it was left to the
[423] care of women and children. During the czarist regime the land was owned by the mir (village community) and it was divided between the peasants for only temporary tillage. Under Soviet rule the land belongs to the State and is distributed to the kolkhozes and sovkhozes.

241 Vepsian agricultural implements and
412 methods of tillage have been very primitive. N. S. Rozov, who in 1926 made a field trip to the Middle Vepsians, did not see a single iron plough or iron harrow, and the peasants were generally using harrows made of branches. According to Ianson's information (published in 1929) more than 90 per cent of the Vepsian peasants in Leningrad oblast used the three-field system, and the same percentage employed only wooden implements.

241 A slash-and-burn economy was practised in all Vepse at least until the 1920's. In North Vepse the peasants got by this means their best flax and turnip land mainly from young hardwood forests. Since the newly-won lands for cultivation were usually far away from the villages and there were no roads leading to

3: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4
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241 them, the harvested crops were left in the fields until the beginning of winter.

Ianson relates that after the revolution of 1917 there was noticeable among the Vepsians a considerable trend toward improvement of cultivation methods, but in comparison with the rest of the population of Leningrad oblast the Vepsians were still considerably backward.

231 Cattle-breeding has also been on a low level. Isaijeva Vepsians raised many sheep (10-15 to a farm) because of their felt industry; they also had many chickens, an average of three cows and one horse per farm, but no pigs. The North Vepsians seldom had more than one cow and one horse for each family. Before the first World War they began to keep pigs, but abandoned this later. There were no pigs in South Vepse.

231 The latest source available on the Vepsians,
241 Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, has this to say about the present situation of Vepsian agriculture and cattle-breeding: "The basic occupation /of the Vepsians/ is the socialistic collective economy (agriculture and cattle-breeding), in which advanced technics are utilized." This statement strongly contradicts all other sources which stress the primitiveness of the Vepsians' farming methods. Since it is not possible that great improvements among this backward people could have occurred overnight, we must be extremely skeptical of the "advanced Technics" referred to in this Soviet source.

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000 "advanced technics" referred to in this Soviet source.

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Other means of livelihood. All other occupations besides farming have very little significance in Vepse. In 1897, only 0.89 per cent of these people got their livelihood from fishing and hunting. Fishing has importance only for the North Vepsians. Formerly they fished not only for their own food but also for trade. All the salmon was sold, whereas whitefish and other cheaper kinds of fish they used themselves. Their fishing gear consisted of nets and seines. The seines were owned by two or three persons and the catch was divided between them.

[227]

In more recent times the catch is said to be quite small because of the decreasing supply of fish in the waters and the primitive fishing methods. But even when the catch is good, the fishermen do not like to admit it either to their family or to outsiders, for they are afraid that the water spirit may get angry and tangle their nets.

[776]

The Middle and South Vepsians fish for their own food on Sundays and at other free times. For each village there are one to two seines belonging to several families. Kettunen, on the occasion of his second trip to the Vepsians in 1934, states that the illegal fishing has ruined the formerly rich abundance of fish in the Vepsian lakes.

3: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4
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000 of fish in the Vepsian lakes.

224 Hunting is practised only very little and mainly in winter. The hunter carries a special stick at the end of which the footprint of an animal is carved.

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221 Since the occupations listed so far could not provide the Vepsians with their entire livelihood, they used, before the Bolsheviks came to power, to travel around seeking work. The Isaijeva Vepsians were known as felt shoemakers and they roamed wide areas in northern Russia making their shoes. They travelled to Middle Vepse, to the White Lake area, and to the south as far as the Vologda, Jaroslav and Tver governments. Twice a year they set forth on their journeys, two men together. The first trip, taken in October, lasted for 6-8 weeks, whereas the second trip in March or April was shorter. Men of the same village usually travelled in the same areas. The North Vepsians worked as stonemasons and stonecutters in St. Petersburg, Kronstadt, Helsinki and elsewhere. The Middle Vepsians from the village Ladv and its neighborhood were glaziers, and the South Vepsians used to work during the winters hauling lumber.

113

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3: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4
Vepses

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The map entitled "Vepsian Villages" was lost in transit. We publish here the map of Karelia which shows only the North Vepsians. The areas of the Middle and South Vepsians are to the south of them.

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